

US Forest Service

San Bernardino National Forest

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Spanish Broom Control Project Begins August 16

San Bernardino, Calif., August 3, 2010 – The San Bernardino National Forest has awarded contracts to remove Spanish Broom along State Route 18 between Crestline and San Bernardino to create jobs and improve safety for the motoring public. The \$508, 000-dollar project is part of the USDA’s role in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The one-year contracts were awarded to Great Bear Restoration and Pestmaster Services Inc.

The Project is planned to begin Monday August 16, along State Route 18, starting between Lake Gregory Drive and State Route 138. The work will then progress from State Highway 138 along State Route 18 to the Forest boundary near lower Old Waterman Canyon Road. Forest officials anticipate completion of the roadside work by the end of September.

The work will require a short-term closure of State Highway 18 from Lake Gregory Drive to State Route 18 during the non-commute hours for four days beginning Monday August 16. The remainder of the project will be along the four-lane portion of State Route 18 and will include closure of one lane of traffic during non-commute weekday hours. Caltrans will post daily traffic conditions on their public website.

The contractor will cut and remove Spanish Broom and hand apply “Aquamaster” herbicide to prevent re-growth. All state and federal regulations will be followed to protect workers, the public, water quality and the environment. Low growing native vegetation will also be re-established in priority locations. Treatments will continue annually on National Forest lands until broom plants are controlled within the road prism. Long-term monitoring and management of treated areas will be necessary to prevent reestablishment due to seed in soil, long life of seed and its dispersal capabilities.

Spanish Broom is a hardy invasive shrub, which can grow up to 15 feet tall. This plant re-sprouts after cutting and burning and reestablishes quickly after disturbances such as road maintenance and wildfires. It is rated and managed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture as a noxious weed.

Safety along the mountain highway evacuation route is compromised because Spanish broom plants encroach into the roadway and reduce road width, block the line of sight reducing visibility and obscure signing. It also grows within cracks in the asphalt and destabilizes guardrails. The protection of

evacuation routes is important to public and emergency personnel safety in the event of wildfire or other emergencies and is one of the three priorities of the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST).

Information on the overall U.S. Forest Service role in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/recovery>. Information on the total federal effort can be found at <http://www.recovery.gov>.

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